

The City of Lake Forest
Building Review Board
Proceedings of February 5, 2020 Meeting

A regular meeting of the Lake Forest Building Review Board was held on Wednesday, February 5, 2020 at 6:30 p.m., at the Municipal Services Building, 800 Field Drive, Lake Forest, Illinois.

Building Review Board members present: Chairman Jim Diamond and Board members, Joanne Bluhm, John Looby, Fred Moyer, James Sykora and Richard Walther

Building Review Board members absent: Chris Bires

Staff present: Catherine Czerniak, Director of Community Development
Jennifer Baehr, Assistant Planner

1. Introduction of Board members and staff, overview of meeting procedures – Chairman Diamond

Chairman Diamond reviewed the role of the Building Review Board and the meeting procedures followed by the Board. He asked the members of the Board and staff to introduce themselves.

2. Consideration of the minutes of the January 7, 2020 meeting of the Building Review Board.

The minutes of the January 7, 2020 meeting were approved as submitted.

**3. Consideration of a request for approval of a dormer proposed on the front elevation of the existing residence at 374 Wisconsin Avenue.
Property Owner: Kristin Ryan
Representative: Sue Auerbach and Pamela Fischer, Auerbach Architects**

Chairman Diamond asked the Board members for any Ex Parte contacts or conflicts of interest. Hearing none, he invited a presentation from the petitioner.

Ms. Fischer introduced the project on behalf of the property owner. She explained that the lot is an unusual shape and that the single family home on the property is nonconforming with respect to zoning setbacks. She stated that the request before the Board is for approval of a wide shed dormer on the front elevation. She explained that the dormer requires a zoning variance because it is located on the portion of the house that is located within the front yard setback. She stated that the Zoning Board of Appeals considered the request for a variance last month and recommended approval. She stated that the dormer is desired by the property owner to provide additional storage space in the attic. She added that the existing house has very limited closet and storage space. She stated that the dormer is 9 feet wide and 9 feet long and as proposed, will be centered over the

front door. She explained that smaller single dormers were studied, however she stated that single dormers do not provide the desired storage space. She stated that the dormer has a shed style roof and a stucco exterior to match the existing house. She noted that there are existing shed dormers on the rear and side elevations of the house. She stated that the surrounding neighborhood is comprised of smaller homes built as early as the 1920's adding that some of the homes have similar shed dormers.

Ms. Baehr stated that the request is straightforward adding that the proposed dormer is in compliance with the allowable square footage. She noted that the dormer appears somewhat out of character with the home. She asked for Board input on the design, scale and form of the dormer in relation to the existing house.

Board member Sykora commended the petitioner on incorporating the materials and architectural detailing of the existing house into the design of the dormer.

In response to questions from Board member Sykora, Ms. Fischer stated that in response to staff comments, efforts were made to refine the design of the dormer. She added that the proportions of the dormer were driven by the existing roof form.

In response to questions from Board member Bluhm, Ms. Auerbach explained that the attic is not tall enough to allow for buildout as a bedroom. She added that the property owner does not need any additional bedroom space.

Board member Bluhm noted that initially, she was concerned about the prominence of the dormer on the front elevation but noted that after visiting the site and understanding how the home is sited on the lot in relation to the surrounding homes, she no longer has that concern

In response to questions from Board member Bluhm, Ms. Auerbach explained that there was discussion about using a more traditional style dormer, a hip or gable but noted that a shed dormer is proposed because there are shed dormers on the side and rear elevations.

Board member Looby stated that the size of the dormer appears appropriate. He observed that the dormer provides natural light into the attic.

Board member Moyer stated that the scale of the dormer appears to work with the existing home given that the house is shorter than the surrounding homes. He added that the dormer adds interest to the streetscape.

In response to questions from Board member Moyer, Ms. Auerbach explained that the addition of a bathroom in the attic creates a separate bathroom for the children.

Board member Walter stated that the appearance of dormer is appropriate for the house.

In response to questions from Board member Walther, Ms. Baehr explained that staff's recommendation to set the dormer further back from the front of the house was intended

to help minimize its appearance from the street and allow the dormer to integrate more comfortably into the existing roof form.

In response to questions from Chairman Diamond, Ms. Fischer stated that the interior space created by the dormer is 8 feet long by 9 feet wide. She added that the height of the dormer at the windows is 5 feet and 10 inches extending up to 6 feet and 6 inches.

In response to questions from Board member Looby, Ms. Fischer explained that the exhaust for the bathroom in the attic will be through the roof on the rear of the house.

Hearing no further comments or questions from the Board, Chairman Diamond invited public testimony. Hearing none, he invited a motion.

Board member Walther made a motion to recommend approval of the addition of a dormer to the front elevation. The recommendation is based on the findings in the staff report, the testimony presented by the petitioner, and the Board's deliberations. Approval is recommended subject to the following conditions:

1. If any modifications are made to the plans in response to Board direction, or, as the result of final design development, the modifications shall be clearly called out on the plan and a copy of the plan originally provided to the Board shall be attached for comparison purposes. Staff is directed to review any changes, in consultation with the Chairman as appropriate, to determine whether the modifications are in conformance with the Board's direction and approval prior to the issuance of any permits.
2. A plan for construction parking and materials' staging shall be submitted for review and will be subject to approval by the City's Certified Arborist, City Engineer and Director of Community Development.

The motion was seconded by Board member Looby and approved by a vote of 7 to 0.

**4. Consideration of a request for approval of the demolition of the existing attached garage, construction of a replacement garage and additions to the residence at 685 Burton Drive. A building scale variance is also requested.
Property Owners: Patrick and Julie Barry
Representative: Michael Breseman, architect**

Chairman Diamond asked the Board members for any Ex Parte contacts or conflicts of interest. Hearing none, he invited a presentation from the petitioner.

Mr. Breseman introduced the project on behalf of the property owners. He explained that the surrounding neighborhood is comprised of one and two story homes of many different architectural styles. He stated that the home that is the subject of this request was built in 1928. He provided background on the original owner of the home. He stated that the Barry's have been the owners of the home for the last eight years. He stated that the Barry's put the home on the market in 2019, but received no offers. He explained that one

of the goals of the project is to provide a functional garage that has enough space for two cars. He noted that the existing garage is 18 feet wide. He stated that it is not possible to have two cars parked in the existing garage and still have enough space to open the doors. He explained that another component of this project is to create a more centrally located kitchen and breakfast area and a mudroom and storage space on the first floor. He added that the current layout of the kitchen and breakfast area is awkward. He stated that on the second floor, a master suite and new laundry room are proposed. He stated that the proposed addition requires a building scale variance of 3.2%. He explained that based on the methodology used for the City's square footage calculation, the 14 inch thick exterior walls count toward the second floor square footage. He added that a large amount of the square footage overage comes from the thick exterior walls on the second floor. He explained that the site plans show the new garage being slightly shifted to the southeast and the new breakfast area at the rear of the home. He stated that based on an auto-turn study completed by the project engineer, the driveway is as small as possible to allow for sufficient ingress, egress and the required turning movements. He explained that the corner of the garage addition is 24 feet from the east property line, 9 feet more than the required setback. He explained that grading and drainage plans were prepared by Bleck Engineering, and included in the Board's packet. He stated that the massing of the additions are simple, consistent with the existing home. He added that the height of the additions is also lower than the existing home. He stated that the additions will use the same exterior materials and architectural detailing as the existing home. He explained that the property owners completed an extensive landscaping project in 2016 and as a result, there is mature vegetation along the east property line. He stated that some additional foundation plantings are proposed around the additions and some hydrangeas are proposed to fill in sparse areas on the east property line. He presented different views of the additions and passed around a massing model for the Board's review.

Ms. Baehr explained that this project includes the demolition of the attached garage, single-story and two-story additions and a request for a building scale variance. She stated that based on staff's review, the criteria are met for the demolition of the existing garage and findings in support of the demolition are detailed in the staff report. She explained that the proposed additions are designed to match the style of the existing house, and the proposed materials are all high quality, natural materials, consistent with the City's design standards. She stated that the existing house totals 3,239 square feet and complies with the allowable square footage for the property. She explained that the proposed additions will add 1,492 square feet to the house, which results in an overage of 3% of the allowable square footage. She stated that the criteria for a building scale variance are outlined in the staff report. She explained that based on staff's review, the project meets the criteria for a building scale variance because the additions are sited in a way that helps to minimize the appearance of mass, the height of the additions is compatible with other houses in the neighborhood and existing landscaping on the property will help to mitigate the appearance of the additions. She added that a few letters from neighbors were submitted and included in the Board's packet. She explained that one of the letters expresses concern about increased runoff from the site as a result of the expanded driveway. She stated that in response to the concerns raised by the neighbor's letter, a condition is included in staff's recommendation that directs the City Engineer to consider ways to

mitigate runoff on to the adjacent property.

Board member Looby stated that the proposed additions and alterations are needed in order to make the home livable for the Barry family.

In response to questions from Board member Looby, Mr. Breseman stated that the north garage bay is not intended for parking a vehicle but is to be used for storage.

In response to questions from Board member Sykora, Mr. Breseman stated that the new garage is 22 feet wide and 22 feet deep. He stated that the new garage is not oversized, but is comfortable. He explained that the walls of the breakfast nook addition will have ironwork to match the ironwork found on the existing front balcony and side porch. He explained that the covered man door proposed on the rear elevation is relocated from the east elevation. He added that the covered man door helps to break up the garage mass as viewed from the rear.

Board member Moyer explained that the siting of the additions allows for a large amount of open space to be retained on the property. He added that locating the additions toward the southeast corner of the house, set back from the front elevation, helps to soften the appearance of the additions from the street.

Mr. Breseman explained that the design of the additions is meant to be respectful of the existing home and consistent with the character of the neighborhood.

Board member Moyer stated that additional landscaping will be important to help minimize the view of the additions from the surrounding neighbors.

In response to questions from Board member Bluhm, Mr. Breseman stated that the garage addition is not closer to the street than the existing house. He explained that the garage addition is 24 feet from the east property line, 9 feet further than the required 15 foot side yard setback. He stated that because the house is set at an angle, the garage mass is not fully visible from the street. He stated that the driveway configuration is driven by the required turning movements to facilitate access the garage bays on the east elevation. He added that the driveway is about a foot closer to the east neighbor than the existing driveway. He stated that the project engineer is considering options to mitigate increased runoff, if there is any. He added that it was suggested that curb be installed along the driveway to prevent runoff from the driveway on to the property to the east.

Board member Walther noted that the unique siting of the home can be considered in the Board's review of a building scale variance. He stated that the proposed porch, although it contributes to the square footage of the house, is open in nature and does not add to the appearance of mass. He stated that in his opinion, sufficient information was provided by the petitioner and staff to justify the variance.

Board member Looby suggested that the light fixtures on the east elevation be reviewed by staff to ensure that off site light impacts are mitigated.

In response to comments by Board member Looby, Mr. Breseman stated that some exterior lights can be eliminated to lessen the impact on the neighbors. He added that the exterior lights on the garage can be recessed in the balcony above so they can be hidden from view.

Hearing no further questions from the Board, Chairman Diamond invited public comment.

Mitchell Warren, 905 Castlegate Court, stated that he and his family have lived in Lake Forest for 20 years. He explained that the neighborhood has significant open space with generously sized lots. He stated concern about the size of the proposed additions and the potential for drainage impacts on his property as a result of the increased size of the house and additional impervious surface. He stated that the Barry's property is higher than his property adding that water already pools in his ear yard. He stated that a curb along the driveway may help prevent runoff from the property into his side yard. He noted however that it is not clear how runoff will be handled in the rear yard. He asked that the potential for drainage on to his property be mitigated given the increased impervious surface proposed as part of the project. He stated that he understands that the Barry's desire a more functional home but noted that the proposed second story addition appears oversized and unnecessary. He stated that the proposed two-story addition will encroach about 30 feet closer to his property than the existing two-story portion of the house. He stated that the size of the additions does not appear appropriate given the size of the property. He stated that he does not support the proposed increase in square footage.

Hearing no further public testimony, Chairman Diamond invited comments from the Board and staff.

Ms. Baehr stated that the grading and drainage plan is subject to review and approval by the City Engineer before a building permit can be issued. She noted that staff will provide a copy of the grading and drainage plan to Mr. and Ms. Warren prior to the issuance of a building permit for their review, questions and comments.

In response to public testimony, Mr. Breseman stated that portions of the existing driveway will be removed and as a result, the reconfigured driveway will be 23 square feet smaller than the existing driveway. He stated that to the extent possible, drainage will be addressed as part of the project.

Mr. Barry stated that the natural path of runoff is to the east, toward his property. He explained that water currently pools in his rear yard and in the Warren's rear yard.

Board member Walther noted that a condition of staff's recommendation is to have the City Engineer, when he is reviewing the grading and drainage plans, consider ways to mitigate runoff on to the adjacent property. He explained that if the Warren's have always had drainage issues on their property, this project may be a good opportunity to collaborate with the neighbors to address the drainage problems.

Ms. Czerniak offered that the City Engineer can meet with Mr. and Ms. Warren on site to understand what they are experiencing on their property. She stated that there may be ways to direct water away from homes, but noted that overland flows often result in pooling in back yards during and after storms. She stated that the City's priority is to prevent water from entering homes. She stated that the proposed structure meets the required zoning setbacks and noted that a 3.2% square footage overage is relatively small. She noted that as detailed in the staff report, the criteria for a building scale variance appear to be satisfied. She noted that one of the variance criteria speaks specifically to historic homes, recognizing that in order to update these homes, a variance may be appropriate. She explained that the code provides for a variance process and one of the key roles of the Building Review Board is to review variance requests. She stated that the code does not simply prohibit structures from going above a particular square footage, but states that square footage overages must be evaluated based on the criteria in the code.

In response to questions from Chairman Diamond, Mr. Breseman stated that the size of the second floor master suite is driven by the size of the garage below. He stated that he worked through scenarios to meet the building scale requirements but the size of the garage became tight and as a result, would not solve the problems.

Board member Moyer stated that the proposed additions maintain the character of the existing home very well, and noted that making modifications to the forms in an effort to meet the building scale requirements could take away from the quality and character of the additions as they relate to the existing home.

Board member Bluhm commended the Barry's for improving the home to make it more functional for their family.

Mr. Barry explained that when they had listed the home on the market, many prospective buyers commented that the garage was unusable and the kitchen space was not sufficient.

Mr. Warren suggested consideration of a two and half car garage and a reduction in the size of the second floor addition.

Hearing no further comments from the Board, Chairman Diamond invited a motion.

Board member Walther made a motion to recommend approval of the demolition of the existing garage, a building scale variance and the one and two-story additions based on the findings detailed in this report. Approval is recommended subject to the following conditions:

1. If any modifications are made to the plans that were presented to the Board, either in response to Board discussion and direction, or as the result of final design development, the modifications shall be clearly called out on the plan and a copy of the plan originally provided to the Board shall be attached for comparison purposes. Staff is directed to review any changes, in consultation with the Chairman

as appropriate, to determine whether the modifications are in conformance with the Board's direction and approval prior to the issuance of any permits.

2. A final landscape plan shall be submitted and will be subject to review and approval by the City's Arborist. Particular attention shall be paid to assuring sufficient screening along the north and east property lines either through existing vegetation or, additional plantings if it is determined by the City's Certified Arborist that additional screening can be accommodated to reasonably screen the appearance of the additions, garage mass, and the expanded driveway.
3. A final grading and drainage plan shall be submitted and will be subject to review and approval by the City Engineer. The City Engineer is directed to pay particular attention to mitigating runoff to the east from the expanded driveway. Consideration should be given to the installation of a curb along a portion of the eastern edge of the driveway to prevent stormwater runoff on to the neighboring property.
4. Details of any exterior lighting that is proposed shall be provided with the plans submitted for permit. Cut sheets of all light fixtures shall be provided and all fixtures shall direct light downward and the source of the light shall be fully shielded from view by the fixture or by sight obscuring glass. All exterior lights, except for motion detector lights for security purposes, shall be set on timers to turn off no later than 11 p.m.
5. A plan for construction parking and materials' staging shall be submitted for review and will be subject to approval by the City's Certified Arborist, City Engineer and Director of Community Development.

OTHER ITEMS

4. Opportunity for the public to address the Building Review Board on non-agenda items.

There was no additional public testimony presented to the Board.

5. Additional information from staff.

No additional information was presented by staff.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Baehr
Assistant Planner